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ABSTRACT

The demand, supply, sponsorship, and need for staff development and training activities for middle-level collegiate administrators is examined and discussed. Data were gathered by a survey research questionnaire and structured interviews with 200 administrators and faculty at 20 colleges and universities, and an extensive review of the literature. Questions addressed include the following: What staff development and training activities for collegiate middle-managers are currently available and will be sought in the future? What new areas of expertise will be required by institutions? What areas of training and development are desired by middle-level administrators? How are older staff trained for new responsibilities or retrained to keep up with their fields? Who sponsors training? (Author)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCE: STAFF NEEDS AND TRAINING GOALS IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the demand, supply, sponsorhip, and need for staff development and training activities for middle-level collegiate administrators. The increasing numbers of these administrators and the rising cost of administration make it an area we need to know more about if we are to offer proper accountability to constituents, limit institutional growth during a "steady-state" period, and achieve effective administrative organizations. Questions discussed include the following: What staff development and training activities for collegiate middle-managers are currently available and will be sought in the future? What new areas of expertise will be required by institutions? What areas of training and development are desired by middle-level administrators? How are older staff trained for new responsibilities, or retrained to keep up with their fields? Who sponsors training?

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Introduction

The growth of collegiate administration has been discussed many times (Bess and Lodahl, 1969; Brown, 1969; Knapp, 1969; Baldridge, et al., 1978). In the short span of time from the mid-1960's to the early 1970's, current fund expenditures by colleges and universities for administration increased by more than 30%, while expenditures for instruction increased by only 10% (Mertin, 1968, 1974); and this was during a period when enrollments nearly doubled (Thompson, 1970). The signs are that this growth has continued during the recent "steady-state" period (Scott, 1977).

Using data gathered by a survey research questionnaire and structured interviews with education association executives, nearly two hundred administrators and faculty at twenty colleges and universities of different sizes and types, and an extensive review of literature, I have examined the causes of growth, elaboration, and differentiation in middle-level collegiate administration; the role dimensions and conflicts, status, and values of incumbents; and the demand, need, supply, and sponsorship of staff development and training activities for this level of administration as currently available and as required in the future. In this brief paper, I will focus on the issues of staff development and training.

Basically, middle-level administrative staffs fulfill three functions. They serve as liaison with external suppliers of resources, be they financial, materiél, or human; they implement procedures for internal allocation of resources and control of activities, especially in matters of campus coordination and

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compliance with external requirements; and they work with student activities and curricular responsibilities in helping students become oriented to college requirements, standards, and opportunities. In each of these areas, new demands for accountability and limits to expansion imposed by a decline in financing have made it necessary to offer new forms of training to help middle-managers in their work. A new emphasis on effective administration adds to these pressures (Gross, 1976).

As collegiate organizations change in formal authority structure from a "leader-dominate" form, to a form based on tradition, to a rational-legal form, new requirements are forced on those charged with administration (Blau, 1973. For an interesting view of this change in a prison system, see Jacobs, 1977). The processes by which these new tasks are mastered vary by institutional setting, but two constants exist. In each case, there are both institutional and individual imperatives. By this I mean that some training and development activities are sponsored to meet organizational needs, and others are offered more to meet individual desires for improvement than for reasons of organizational effectiveness.

Efforts related to organizational needs are likely to be concerned, first, with a desire for an "effective administration," i.e., one which comprises goal formulation, goal attainment, resource acquisition, and membership satisfaction (Genova, et al., 1976). A second concern is the manner in which these activities are carried out and the influence on this institutional behavior by presidential or leadership style (Baumgartel, 1976, p. 23; Brooks, 1973, p. 432; Henderson and Henderson, 1974, p. 20; Richardson, 1975, p. 306). And third, federal and state, as well as corporate trustee, requirements for administrative accountability in academic, financial, and personnel matters carry such severe sanctions that presidents are well-advised to be concerned about how campus authorities conduct their business. Colleges and universities are under enormous pressure to change from being like private, family-owned companies dominated by relatives to become more like publicly held corporations, and accountable for their actions (Scott, 1978a).

Therefore, since middle-level collegiate administration is really an extension of the president because he or she cannot possibly answer all inquiries and make all decisions, it is necessary for the president to be concerned with the professional health and condition of his subordinate officers (Bess and Lodahl, 1969; Thomas, 1978). The manner in which they conduct their affairs will affect his relations with faculty and outside groups. His ability to control the growth of administration will depend upon his knowledge of it. For reasons of organizational effectiveness, he must be concerned about the ability of his staff to meet specific requirements. However, there is not much evidence that higher education institutions sponsor training for these needs.

Another demand is for training and staff development that fulfills individual needs for recognition, desire, and job requirements. Collegiate middle-managers want to learn, be challenged, and be appreciated. Programs of staff development can meet these diverse individual needs. The motives for wanting training are revealed in responses to questions about incentives for improving skills. Middle-level administrators list job security, personal advancement, keeping up with the complexities of the job, personal growth and satisfaction, salary increases, peer recognition, and personal pride (Scott, 1978b).

When one asks about incentives for gaining increased competence that <u>should</u> be offered, he learns that high on the list are in-house mobility, job rotation, and institutional support for staff development programs. Some respondents mention "performance evaluation," which is the chief, formal way of measuring the competence and performance of those who manage (Anderson, 1975; Dressel, 1976; Genova, et al., 1976). These different demands for training and development can be complementary, but often are not. [See the appendix for a selection of questions and answers about training and development programs taken from my intensive survey questionnaire (Scott, 1978d).]

Presidents and other senior administrators say they want well-trained, competent, highly motivated staff who, like research faculty, are "self-starters." But similar incentives--e.g. leaves, tenure, and adequate resources--are not provided (Bowen, 1978). Few institutions do more than provide funds for travel to association meetings as a form of professional development. It is not unusual to hear college presidents say that support for training is not important: after all, there is no mobility in college administration, and, therefore, no need to commit hard-pressed budget dollars to training; there is a constant supply of recent graduates and faculty who have either been denied tenure or who wish to move out of their studies into administration; and, finally, administrators with a desire to learn will find the courses they need on their own (Scott, 1978c).

In fact, the training given most support by institutions is for new deans and other senior executives, and for secretaries, clerks, and technicians. The former is sponsored by national associations, the latter by institutions themselves.

While most staff development activities have been directed toward teachers, and there is a long tradition of in-service training for elementary and secondary school teachers, we have witnessed in recent years a growth in the number of training and development opportunities for collegiate administrators. These follow closely on the heels of programs for college faculty. Charles Fisher, director of the Institute for College and University Administrators, American Council on Education (ACE), provides an excellent brief review of this topic in Research Currents, June 1977c. Gaff, Festa, and Gaff (1978) offer a more extensive review of this literature.

Possible causes for this growth in training activities are varied. Gross (1976) and Fisher (1977c) suggest several that are corroborated by my research.

1. A new sense of management accountability on campuses.
2. An eagerness to learn that brings many administrators to college employment in the first place.
3. The inherent relationship between administrator evaluation and training.
4. The desire to keep up with new complexities and technologies.

One career development expert, a professor of psychology at Pennsylvania State University and a consultant to industry, argues that managers should spend twenty percent of their time keeping up-to-date by learning new techniques and reviewing significant old ones (Fowler, June 24, 1977, p. D5). Consultation with others in similar positions and reading are among the most frequent sources of information for professional development and new ideas for job responsibilities (Scott, 1976), but such informal means can be inefficient.

More formal opportunities are numerous, as a quick review of advertisements in almost any issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education will show. The Chronicle also publishes the annual "Calendar: A Guide to Meetings, Conventions, Seminars and Travel." A major reference is A Guide to Professional Development Opportunities for College and University Administrators published by ACE (Galloway and Fisher, 1978).

Programs vary in sponsorship, scope, and audience. Some are sponsored by national or regional associations; some are commercial ventures; others are in the form of institutes sponsored by universities. They range in time from a day or more to a week, and up to six weeks in length. The curriculum may be aimed specifically at the responsibilities of a particular set of administrators, or it may emphasize institutional-level planning and decision-making. Many administrators I interviewed expressed strong interest in the topics of budgeting, accounting, computers, legal issues, and evaluation. The audience may be department chairmen, deans, business officers, student personnel administrators, vice presidents, or presidents (Scott, 1978c).

Staff training and development in colleges and universities face severe obstacles. While military, business, and governmental employers regularly send their executives and officers to training programs, collegiate institutions do not. Consequently, many administrators lack the sponsorship, budget, and time necessary to attend the programs that exist. The aura of an amateur or silent administration is still desired by many presidents and faculties (Knapp, 1969; Baldridge, et al., 1978). It is ironic that institutions of higher learning should devote such a small percentage of resources to the training of their staffs. Hilton Hotels has a career development institute in Montreal, established in 1968, to which everyone from housekeepers to vice-presidents goes for training. Each hotel has a training budget. In addition, managers have other forms of training in different locations and are sent to U.S. business schools (Bender, July 23, 1976, p. D3). Xerox has an international training center in Leesburg, Virginia. The 2000-acre campus has facilities for over 1000 students at a time, and a faculty-staff component of 250. Every middle manager attends the special "Managing Tasks Through People" course.

In 1975, the nation's 7,500 largest companies spent more than $1.6 billion for in-house education for their employees. The Conference Board study, which is the source of these figures, also found that almost 45,000 individuals work full-time on training staffs for major corporations (Fowler, June 10, 1977; Lusterman, 1977).

Military programs may be better known. At Cornell, which seems to attract service officers to its professional programs, one rarely meets a Major or Lieutenant who has not spent one-half to two-thirds of his military career in school. The Department of Defense spends more than $6 billion on training and education each year. Thirty percent of the nation's servicemen and officers attend school after work hours and many more are assigned to schools. Sixty percent of the Department of Defense's salary and benefit budget goes to servicemen as students (Greenberg, 1978). Federal bureau examples include the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Civil Service Commission programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Another difference between staff development in colleges and universities, business, and the military is that the former concentrates on higher level administrators while the latter two cover the whole spectrum of executives.

Programs for local staff exist on many larger campuses. Some have been described in College and University Bulletin (October 1976). Such programs may include existing graduate-level course registration at reduced fees, formal degree programs in higher education administration, and sponsorship of administrators at programs off-campus. Nearly 300 colleges have in-house professional development programs, many with a full-time training director. Programs sponsored include seminars and workshops in fund accounting, principles of managing, using the computer, publications, assertiveness training, effective use of time, telephone techniques, discipline and grievance procedures, handling the mail, awareness training, career planning, and transactional analysis ("Training and Development Opportunities at Cornell").

The Higher Education Management Institute is conducting a survey of the need for training among administrators and will develop new programs. The results of that study will do much to increase the number of institutions with training opportunities. However, while such programs are well-known in industry and the military, they are rare in higher education. Colleges and universities have simply not yet acknowledged the value of career administration and the importance of training.

The lack of sympathy for professional development, low salaries, and dissatisfaction with prospects for mobility (Millett, 1977) together with the low status of middle-managers on campus (Perkins, 1973), make it small wonder that they turn to other sources of help. Partly in an attempt to correct this

situation, administrative groups have tried to develop mechanisms of their own. For example, the association of college advancement officials, CASE, which is for alumni and development officers, has developed a program of competence training and certificating--they say it is not certifying--and the financial aid association has discussed doing the same (Scott, 1978c).

The CASE Certificate Program, a non-credit career improvement program, provides a permanent record of professional growth, an annual review of progress, and an opportunity to work with an experienced CASE member. The Program works at three levels of experience. A member may work toward the Functional Area Certificate, for college advancement officials with one to three years experience; the Program Management Certificate, for those with three to eight years of experience; and the Executive Management Certificate for advancement administrators with eight or more years of experience. The completion of each certificate should take at least three years and be completed within five years. The certificates are not sequential.

Financial aid administrators have also been active in developing training and evaluation programs. For an excellent review of them, see Davis and Van Dusen (1978).

One of the complaints about off-campus programs, in addition to their cost, time, and low correlation to retention, is that they are often rushed into production in the wake of a fad. Ryan reported on the proliferation of conferences on collective bargaining when that topic was first current. There were 300 conferences on the topic in one year, with forty in the month of October alone (Ryan, 1976, p. 6).

If Collective Bargaining was the topic in 1973-74, the subject for 1978 is management, especially as it concerns women. New institutes have been created to offer training in management, from one-day "whirlwind" overviews prior to national association meetings, to eight-day workshops with well-known authors and consultants as instructors. Annual meetings have been devoted to the topic, and new programs such as the Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration co-sponsored by Bryn Mawr College and HERS (Higher Education Referral Service)--three and one-half weeks, $1500--and the Institute for Administrative Advancement at the University of Wisconsin-Madison--four weeks, $800 plus room and board--are developing good reputations. The best-known programs are those offered by ACE and by Harvard.

The Institute for College and University Administrators of the American Council on Education was established at Harvard in 1955 and moved to ACE ten years later. By 1976, some 5000 administrators from 1200 colleges and universities had participated in its various week-long institutes for senior institutional officers (Fisher, 1977c).

The Harvard University Institute for Educational Management, a six-week-long program which started in 1970, enrolls about 120 senior-level administrators each summer. Its fee totals nearly $3000. Its curriculum covers the topics of academic personnel policy and administration, control and planning systems, educational policy and ethics, evaluation, governmental relations, labor relations, law and higher education, management information systems, managing financial resources, organizational behavior, and organizational design and decision making.

Other institutes are sponsored by associations, such as the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education's week-long summer programs in executive management, communications, educational fund raising, and alumni administration. Fees for these vary from $385 for CASE members to $600 for non-members. Most associations, both occupational and institutional, offer workshops and seminars for the professional development of their members. And it is these "invisible colleges" that come closest to meeting the needs of the

majority of middle-level collegiate administrators (Willingham, 1970). Most of the others are consciously aimed at faculty members with doctorates, women, or senior officers. They are not designed for developing middle-managers.

A little known form of staff development may be found in a publication of the National Center for Public Service Internship Programs. Its directory lists opportunities for the "graduate, post-graduate and mid-career professional." Internships are located in business schools, government agencies, universities, and numerous other places of employment and training. One of the newest to include educational administrators is the President's Executive Interchange Program. However, such programs are beyond the reach of most administrators because their institutions do not offer leaves of absence for training.

Higher Education has not yet realized its responsibility for the professional development of its middle-level staffs. But it is not for lack of good ideas. Charles Fisher of ACE has proposed a National Academy for Leadership Development in Post Secondary Education (1977b), a cooperative, national academy "that is both a conference/training/learning center and a professional development program . . ." The academy would help consolidate and improve the confusing array of often duplicated programs, some of which, he argues, are of dubious quality (1977c, p. 5). Students and faculty would represent the broad array of higher education's constituents. The idea of such an academy is not a new one, but it is not yet a reality, in part, I think, because staff development is not considered a part of organizational development (Richardson, 1975). Nor am I convinced that organizational development is valued by campuses. In fact, the state of academic staff development in the U.S. is a reflection of the status and regard of administrators on campus, which I have discussed elsewhere (Scott, 1978c).

In conclusion, I want to address three issues: the need for change in training curricula, the need for change in the populations offered training, and the need for a change in the sponsors of staff development programs.

At present, most programs available are of three general types: (1) those sponsored by institutional associations for carefully selected faculty chosen for senior administrative positions; (2) those sponsored by middle-managers' occupational associations for their members; and (3), those sponsored by institutions for their employees. The first type may be as much "prestige-conferring" as actually helpful in training for specific skills (Kanter and Wheatley, 1978; see also Baumgartel, 1976). The second type ranges from one-hour workshops at the time of annual meetings to sessions several weeks in length, but they emphasize technical competence. The third type seems to be oriented to non-exempt supervisors and to emphasize the "affective" domain; they include courses such as transactional analysis and getting along with others ("Training and Development Opportunities at Cornell"). My survey reveals that supervisors and managers at all levels want more training in specific content areas such as budgeting, accounting, and managing. In addition, training curricula will have to be expanded to include new areas of expertise required by top administrators. Colleges and universities are limited in how much they can grow and in the extent to which they can afford consultants. Therefore, institutions will have to train current employees for new expertise in areas such as pensions, equal pay laws, safety requirements, and other matters of government regulation.

These proposed changes in training curricula assume a concomitant change in those who are trained. At present, training opportunities are limited, generally, to non-exempt staff, specially selected middle-managers, and newly appointed senior staff. But the biggest needs are represented by veteran middle-managers. First, this is the group that must master new forms of administrative complexity. And second, this is the group that faces the possibility of substantial career disappointment as they come to face the prospects of limited mobility, pay, and status (Scott, 1978c; Bowen, 1978). The needs for mid-career training and job satisfactions have been discussed extensively (see,

for example, Bess and Lodahl, 1969; Flint, 1978; and Solmon and Tierney, 1977). The point here is that we must think not only about who is to be trained, but why they are to be trained.

This concern leads naturally to the third issue, i.e., who should sponsor training and development activities? At present, associations offer most such opportunities with little influence from institutions. (It is true of course that past participants advise association sponsors, but they do so as individuals, not as institutional spokesmen.) While it is impressive that 300 colleges and universities have training programs, many with full-time directors, they represent fewer than 10% of all collegiate institutions in the U.S.

With the increasing complexity of institutional organization and the continued need for new kinds of expert knowledge, together with the fact that opportunities for mobility are becoming increasingly uncertain at a time when job security for middle-managers is increasing (especially through the expansion of "due process" and "equal protection" coverage in personnel matters), it is especially important for institutions to commit resources and become more active in the development and sponsorship of training programs. Such a commitment would not only be symbolically important to university staffs, but could provide the funds necessary to satisfy both institutional needs for competence and efficiency and individual needs for challenge and encouragement. Only with this kind of commitment can there be congruence in staff needs and training goals in American higher education.

Appendix

In addition to interviewing more than two hundred administrators, I surveyed a sample of them with an extensive questionnaire. Sixty-two of ninety responded. The following is a selection of questions and answers. Percentages do not always total 100%.

1. Do you think college and university administration would be improved if there were formal university courses for preparation, internship programs for on-the-job training, or other forms of staff development and training?

   Yes: 60%
   No: 18%
   Perhaps: 8%

2. Who should sponsor such programs?

   Home campus: 35%
   Regional or national association of institutions: 34%
   National association professional groups: 35%

3. Have you taken any special courses, workshops, seminars, etc., which you have found especially helpful in your work:

   Yes: 66%
   No: 15%

4. What subjects did you find most helpful? Which would you like to take?

   Courses and workshops in all facets of management and in government regulations were the most common responses to both questions.

5. Who sponsored the program(s) you participated in?

   National professional associations were by far the most common response.

6. Does your institution have a training or development program for administrators?

   Yes: 18%
   No: 73%

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